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APRIL 11, 2011

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## **CITY CRACKS DOWN ON NEGLIGENT PROPERTY OWNERS**

INDIANAPOLIS – Two property owners face public nuisance charges in separate lawsuits filed today by the Office of City Prosecutor. Caroline Briggs, owner of the historic building at 829 N. Pennsylvania St., and James E. Chalfant/Chadwick Partners, Inc., owner of the historic structure at 1005 N. Pennsylvania St., which was destroyed by fire earlier this year, have been named as defendants. The filings are a joint effort between the City Prosecutor's Office and the Department of Code Enforcement. The City Prosecutor will serve as the enforcement official for the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission.

The suit against Briggs asserts that her conduct has unreasonably damaged the community by causing or allowing her property to become dilapidated, harbor vermin, serve as a temporary residence for vagrants and contribute to blight. As a result of these negligent behaviors, the health, safety and lives of Indianapolis citizens have been imperiled, public resources have been consumed and the property poses an unreasonable risk to emergency responders. The City is seeking injunctive relief, fines and punitive damages.

"These public nuisance charges being filed are part of a greater effort by the City of Indianapolis to crack down on negligent property owners," said Mayor Greg Ballard. "We will not allow negligent property owners to damage our community and drain our public resources."

The suit against Chalfant/Chadwick Partners, Inc. asserts that the fire and subsequent emergency demolition by the City of Indianapolis was a foreseeable result of unreasonable neglect of the owner. The deteriorated condition of the property, coupled with the owner's failure to secure and monitor the property, greatly increased the likelihood and magnitude of a fire. There had been two previous fires documented on the property in addition to the fire that destroyed it. The City is seeking reimbursement for the cost of extinguishing the fire on Jan. 25, 2011, the cost of the emergency demolition and punitive damages.

"Repeat citations and enforcement actions against Briggs have failed to produce any improvements," said City Prosecutor Helen Marchal. "The deteriorated condition of Mr. Chalfant's property unreasonably harmed the City and the citizens it serves by contributing to urban blight."

“The collaborative effort between the Department of Code Enforcement’s Nuisance Abatement section and the Office of City Prosecutor is a great example of how good government should operate to take action against problem property owners who have a negative impact on the quality of life for neighborhoods,” said Rick Powers, Director of the Department of Code Enforcement.

*The mission of the Office of City Prosecutor is to fairly adjudicate violations of the Revised Code of Indianapolis-Marion County in an effort to preserve and protect neighborhoods.*

*The mission of the Department of Code Enforcement (DCE) is to improve the quality of life in the City of Indianapolis through strategic application of civil code regulation; effective licensing, permitting, inspection, enforcement, and abatement practices; and local government oversight of property safety and maintenance, business, event, professional, and construction industries.*

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